

# CHAPTER 48

## INTRODUCTION TO ISAIAH 48

The prophecy of this chapter is concerning the deliverance and salvation of the Jews, and is addressed unto them; who are described by their natural descent and lineage, and by their hypocrisy in religious things, (<sup>2380</sup>Isaiah 48:1,2). By their obstinacy and impudence, and by their proneness to idolatry, and to ascribe that to idols which belonged to God; which were the reasons why the Lord foretold all former things to them, before they came to pass, (<sup>2383</sup>Isaiah 48:3-5). And for the same reasons also he declared unto them what should be hereafter, particularly the destruction of Babylon, and their deliverance by Cyrus, (<sup>2386</sup>Isaiah 48:6-8). From which account of them it would clearly appear, that it was not for any merits of theirs, but for his own name's sake, for his own glory, that he chose them, purified, and saved them as gold tried in the fire, (<sup>2389</sup>Isaiah 48:9-11). He observes his own perfections, his eternity and immutability, and power displayed in creation, to engage their faith in the promise of deliverance, (<sup>2392</sup>Isaiah 48:12,13) and points out the deliverer Cyrus, a type of Christ, whom he loved, called, sent, and made him prosperous, (<sup>2394</sup>Isaiah 48:14-16). Then he directs them to walk in his ways, with promises of peace and prosperity, (<sup>2397</sup>Isaiah 48:17-19). And the chapter is concluded with an exhortation to go out of Babylon with joy, publishing wherever they came their redemption, and who would be supplied with all necessaries in their return to their own land; only it should be observed, that there was no peace or happiness for the wicked, (<sup>2399</sup>Isaiah 48:20-22).

**Ver. 1.** *Hear ye this, O house of Jacob, &c.*] Who were of the house and family of Jacob, his descendants and posterity; and who were of the house of the God of Jacob, had a name and a place there, at least in profession:

*which are called by the name of Israel;* a name given to Jacob, because of his prevalence with God in prayer; but these had only the name, not the thing, however not as yet; they were neither praying Jacobs, nor prevailing Israels; they were not Israelites indeed:

*and are come forth out of the waters of Judah*; that is, were of the seed of Judah, as the Targum, Aben Ezra, and Kimchi interpret it; these were waters out of his buckets, as Jarchi observes from (<sup><0417></sup>Numbers 24:7), so we read of the fountain of Jacob, (<sup><0538></sup>Deuteronomy 33:28). These were streams from thence; they were of the tribe of Judah, to whom the kingdom belonged; from whence was the chief ruler, the Shiloh, the King Messiah; they were of these waters, though not born again of water and of the Spirit:

*which swear by the name of the Lord God*; own him for their God, acknowledge him their Lord and King, and solemnly promise to serve him, and yield obedience to him:

*and make mention of the God of Israel*; or “remember” him<sup>f946</sup> in their religious exercises; invoke his name, sing his praises, ask of him the ordinances of righteousness, honour him with their lips, speak honourably of him, and profess to remember his works of old at their solemn feasts:

*but not in truth, nor in righteousness*; not according to the will of God, nor truth of things; nor in the integrity of their hearts, but in an hypocritical way, and not in sincerity and uprightness; in word and tongue only, not in deed and in truth; worshippers of God they were externally, but not in spirit and truth.

**Ver. 2.** *For they call themselves of the holy city*, &c.] The city Jerusalem, so called because the temple, the place of divine worship, was in it, the residence of the Holy One of Israel: they valued themselves, not only upon their being of the family of Jacob, and of the tribe of Judah, but that they were inhabitants of Jerusalem, the holy city; as many now call themselves fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God, when they are strangers both to God and his people in the experimental knowledge of things:

*and stay themselves upon the God of Israel*; professed to trust in the Lord, and lean upon him, and rely upon his power and providence, his mercy and goodness, and expect all needful things from him, renouncing all confidence in the creature; and yet at the same time acted an hypocritical part, their faith was feigned: (see <sup><0311></sup>Micah 3:11).

*The Lord of hosts is his name*; whom they professed to be their God and Father, their Lord and Husband, their Saviour and Redeemer; who has all power in heaven and in earth, and does according to his will in both

worlds, having the hosts of angels and armies of men at his command, and therefore so called.

**Ver. 3.** *I have declared the former things from the beginning*, &c.] From the time of their first ancestors, from the time of Abraham their father, to whom was declared what should befall his posterity; that they should sojourn in Egypt, be afflicted there, and come out from thence with great substance; that they be brought into the land of Canaan, and the inhabitants of it being driven out before them, (<sup><0153></sup>Genesis 15:13-18).

*And they went forth out of my mouth, and I showed them*; they were told to Abraham by word of mouth; they were shown to him in prophecy:

*I did them suddenly, and they came to pass*; for very quickly these things began to take place, even in Abraham's time; for his seed being a stranger in a land not theirs, and afflicted near four hundred years, must be reckoned from the birth of Isaac; and all which exactly came to pass as was foretold; not one thing which the Lord had spoken of failed; all was punctually fulfilled, (<sup><0245></sup>Joshua 21:45).

**Ver. 4.** *Because I knew that thou art obstinate*, &c.] Or "hard"<sup>f947</sup>, hard hearted, an obdurate and rebellious people, contradicting and gainsaying:

*and thy neck is as an iron sinew*; stiffnecked, inflexible, not compliant with the will of God, and his commands; unwilling to admit his yoke, and bear it:

*and thy brow brass*; impudent, not ashamed of sin, nor blushing at it, refusing to receive correction for it, having a whore's forehead. This the Lord knew and foreknew, and therefore declared before hand what would come to pass unto them; who otherwise would have had the assurance to have ascribed them to themselves, or their idols, and not to him.

**Ver. 5.** *I have even from the beginning declared it to thee*, &c.] From the beginning of their being a people, even before they were formed into a body politic; yea, from the original of them, from the time of Abraham their ancestor, as before observed:

*before it came to pass I showed it thee*; some hundreds of years before; first to Abraham, then to Isaac, then to Jacob, then to Joseph, and then to Moses, and by him to the children of Israel:

*lest thou shouldest say, mine idol hath done them, and my graven image, and my molten image, hath commanded them;* or my libation or fusion of wine, oil, or blood, by which, as by other things, they made conjectures of what was to come to pass; so Gussetius<sup>f948</sup> interprets the last word; lest they should ascribe their deliverance out of Egypt to the idols they made and worshipped, being a people prone to idolatry; as they did when they made a golden calf, and danced about it, (<sup>2304</sup>Exodus 32:4). This the Lord knew before hand, and therefore to prevent this stupidity, or convince them of it, he foretold what should come to pass, which their idols were never able to do.

**Ver. 6.** *Thou hast heard, see all this: and will ye not declare it?* &c.] You have heard of all these things, how they were foretold before they were; how they came to pass exactly as they were predicted; now look over these prophecies, and compare them with the events; see the exact completion of them; and when you have so done, can you be so stouthearted and impudent as to deny them, or not own and confess them?

*I have showed thee new things from this time, even hidden things, and thou didst not know them;* meaning the destruction of the Babylonish empire, and the deliverance of the Jews by Cyrus, prophesied just now in the preceding chapters; things not yet come to pass, newly revealed, which were hidden in the breast of God, and unknown to them until prophesied of; and which were typical of redemption by the incarnate Son of God, whose incarnation, and salvation by him, were new, unheard of, and wonderful things; and of the new state of things under the Gospel dispensation, when all things shall become new; the doctrines and ordinances of which are new; the whole Gospel is a hidden mystery, and unknown to men till revealed and made known by the Spirit of God.

**Ver. 7.** *They are created now, and not from the beginning,* &c.] Not that they were now done or brought into being, for as yet Cyrus was not born; though the raising of him up, and holding his right hand, and his executing the counsel of God, are spoken of as if they were already done, because of the certainty of them, (<sup>2301</sup>Isaiah 45:1,12 46:11). Aben Ezra interprets “created” by “decreed”; though these were not now decreed by God; for no new decrees are made by him; but those which were made by him of old were now revealed and made manifest by prophecy, which is the sense of the phrase; so Kimchi observes,

“the time when they went out of the mouth of God is the time of their creation.”

Thus in like manner the incarnation of Christ, his sufferings and death, and salvation by him, things decreed from eternity, are spoken of in this prophecy as if actually done, because of the clear manifestation and certainty of them:

*even before the day when thou heardest them not*; they were in the breast of God, kept and reserved in his mind, and therefore are before called hidden things, before the Israelites heard anything of them; as were the things respecting Christ, and salvation by him; which were not only in God, who created all things by Christ, but were revealed before the Israelites had any knowledge of them, even to Adam and Eve, immediately after their fall; and were spoken of by all the holy prophets from the beginning of the world:

*lest thou shouldest say, behold, I knew them*; lest they should ascribe their present knowledge of them to their own sagacity and penetration; as if they were not obliged to a divine revelation, but of themselves had got the secret, and became acquainted with these things.

**Ver. 8.** *Yea, thou heardest not; yea, thou knewest not yea, from that time that thine ear was not opened, &c.*] This, as Kimchi rightly observes, is said by way of reproof; showing that they were so far from knowing these things before the prophecy of them was given out, that when it was, they did not hearken or listen to them; they did not understand them, nor receive and embrace them, but turned a deaf ear to them; their hearts being hardened, and they given up blindness of mind; which was the case of the Jews, even when the Messiah, the antitype of Cyrus, came, and there was a more clear revelation of Gospel truths, as was foretold, (<sup>2369</sup>Isaiah 6:9,10 <sup>8129</sup>John 12:39,40). To this sense is the Targum,

“yea, thou has not heard the words of the prophets; yea, thou hast not received the doctrine of the law; yea, thou hast not inclined thine ear to the words of the blessings and curses of the covenant I made with thee at Horeb:”

*for I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously*: with God, and with one another, as they did; and were, as Jeremiah calls them, an assembly of treacherous men; and especially so they were in Christ’s time, and to him; one of his own disciples treacherously betrayed him into the hands of the

Jews, and they delivered him into the hands of the Gentiles to be crucified and slain; all which he knew before hand, (~~John~~ John 6:64 ~~Matthew~~ Matthew 20:18,19). And so the Lord knows all the wickedness and unfaithfulness of men, and of his own people, who are by nature children of wrath, as, others; yet this hindered not the designs of his grace, and the discoveries of his love to them, after expressed:

*and wast called a transgressor from the womb*; from the time of their civil birth, as a people and state, God was their Father that settled and established them; in this sense they were his children, whom he begot, brought up, and nourished; though they rebelled against him, and as soon almost as born, soon after they came out of Egypt, which were the days of their youth, of their infancy as a church and people; witness their murmurings and unbelief, their idolatry in making a golden calf, and worshipping it: and this is applicable to every particular person, and his natural birth, even to everyone of God's elect; who are all conceived in sin, and shapen in iniquity; go astray from God from the womb; and the imagination of whose heart is evil from their youth, and are continually transgressing the righteous law of God, and therefore justly deserve this name.

**Ver. 9.** *For my name's sake will I defer mine anger, &c.]* From age to age, for those sins which had been committed, and continued in ever since they were a people. The above account of them shows that it was not for any merits of theirs, or any works of righteousness done by them, that he showed favour to them, as afterwards expressed; but for his own name's sake, and because of his glory; because these people were called by his name, and said to be his people, lest therefore his name should be reproached among the Heathen, or he should suffer any diminution of his glory, therefore he did not at once stir up all his wrath, as their sins deserved, but prolonged it from time to time:

*and for my praise will I refrain from thee, that I cut thee not off*: that is, refrain mine anger from thee; or "seal" or "stop my nostrils"<sup>1949</sup>, that the smoke of his wrath and anger might not go out from thence to destroy them. The Targum is,

"I will confirm (or establish) thee, that I may not consume thee;"

and this he would do, because of his praise, of the praise of his mercy, grace, and goodness; and that he might have a people to praise him, which he would not, should they be cut off.

**Ver. 10.** *Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver, &c.*] But it is not usual to refine with silver; not silver with silver, nor any other metal with it; that itself is what is refined; this therefore cannot be the sense of the words; wherefore they are, by others, differently rendered; by some, “not in silver”<sup>f950</sup>; not in a furnace of silver, as Aben Ezra; “but in a furnace of poverty”, as the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions render the next clause; and to the same sense the Targum; that is, I have tried, and purified, and refined thee, not by prosperity, but adversity; not with riches, which has its snares, temptations, trials, and exercises, but with poverty, which also has the same, or greater; and therefore Agur desired neither, (~~3008~~ Proverbs 30:8,9). By others, “but not into silver”<sup>f951</sup>, so as to make silver of them, whereby all the labour was lost; but this is contrary to the following clause: by others, “not for the sake of silver”<sup>f952</sup>; so the Septuagint version; or for the gain of it, as the Arabic; which sense suggests that God was no gainer by their afflictions; what he did was freely, without money or price, and all the use and profit were to themselves; (see ~~19412~~ Psalm 44:12). Others think, that instead of “beth”, “in”, it should be “caph”, “as”, a note of similitude, and be rendered, “but not as silver”<sup>f953</sup>; but that the text is corrupted, and ought to be thus altered, there is no authority for it, and besides is contrary to several express passages of Scripture, (~~4660~~ Psalm 66:10 ~~3809~~ Zechariah 13:9 ~~3408~~ Malachi 3:3). Rather therefore it should be rendered, “but not among silver”<sup>f954</sup>; along with that, which requires a fierce fire, is kept in the furnace or melting pot until all the dross is consumed: but if God was to afflict his people to such a degree, they would not be able to bear it; and if they were to continue under his afflicting hand till all their dross, sin, and corruption were removed, they would be utterly consumed; was he to contend, or be wroth for ever, the spirit would fail before him, and the souls that he has made; wherefore he does not afflict in this fierce and furious manner, but gently and gradually, in measure, in mercy, and not in strict justice, (~~46018~~ 1 Corinthians 10:13 ~~3208~~ Isaiah 27:8,9 57:16 ~~24028~~ Jeremiah 10:23 30:11) and by such gentle means he refines and brightens the graces of his people, tries and proves their principles and profession, and reforms their manners: I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction; such was the affliction of Israel in Egypt, called the iron furnace, (~~46041~~ Deuteronomy

4:20) and as God has his furnace to punish and consume his enemies, so he has his furnace to try, purge, and purify his people, (~~2310~~ Isaiah 31:9), and which is a fiery one, and very grievous and distressing, especially when the wrath of God is apprehended in it, though fury is not in him: when he afflicts, it is all in love, and therefore is said to choose his people at such a time; which is to be understood not of their election to grace and glory; for that is not done in time, but in eternity, and is of them, not as transgressor, or as in the corrupt mass, but as in the pure mass of creatureship: rather of calling, which is the fruit, and effect, and evidence of election, and is expressed by choosing, (~~41519~~ John 15:19 ~~40126~~ 1 Corinthians 1:26), and sometimes afflictions have been the means of it; or God has in them, or by them, brought them to himself, as he did Manasseh: but it seems best of all to understand it of the manifestation of election; God sometimes under afflictive providences appears to his people, and tells them that he has loved them with an everlasting love, and assures them that they are his chosen ones; he knows their souls, and owns them as his own in their adversities; besides, in afflicting them, he deals with them as his children and chosen ones; and because they are so, he takes the pains he does with them, which he does not with others, to purge and purify them, (~~43817~~ Psalm 31:7 ~~81217~~ Hebrews 12:7). Moreover, he makes them choice and excellent persons by afflictions; they come forth out of them as choice silver and pure gold; they gain thereby many choice experiences of the love and grace of God, and of the truths of the Gospel, and of the promises of it: afflicted saints are commonly the choicest believers; they become thriving and flourishing Christians, humble and Holy Ones; more fit for their master's use, more weaned from the world, and wrought up for heaven and happiness. Some, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra, render the words, "I have chosen for thee the furnace of affliction"<sup>f955</sup>, or "thee for the furnace of affliction"; afflictions are chosen and appointed for the people of God, and they are chosen for and appointed unto affliction, (~~48214~~ Job 23:14 ~~41113~~ 1 Thessalonians 3:3). Some, as Aben Ezra and Kimchi observe, by the change of a letter, read "bachantica", "have proved thee", or "tried thee", instead of "bachartica", "I have chosen thee"; but without any reason.

**Ver. 11.** *For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it, &c.]* Defer his anger, not cut off his people and destroy them, but redeem and save them: this, in the literal sense, respects the redemption and deliverance of the Jews by Cyrus from the Babylonish captivity; which the Lord did,



not for any deserts of theirs, but for the sake of his own honour and glory; or, as the Targum,

“for my name, and for my word;”

which is repeated here again and again for the confirmation of it, and that it might be more observed. In the mystical sense, it respects redemption and salvation by Christ, of which the former was typical:

*for how should my name be polluted?* blasphemed and evil spoken of among the nations of the world; who would be ready to say, that either the Lord did not love his people, and was not mercifully disposed towards them; or that he could not save them, and that their hands, or their gods, were mightier than he; (see <sup><4526></sup>Deuteronomy 32:26,27)

*and I will not give my glory to another;* to another people, as the Targum, or to another god; (See Gill on “<sup><2308></sup>Isaiah 42:8”).

**Ver. 12.** *Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called,* &c.] Called before out of Egypt, and now out of Babylon, and who had the name of God called upon them, and who called upon the name of the Lord; so such who are called with a holy calling, according to the purpose and grace of God, by the Spirit and grace of Christ, unto fellowship with him, to partake of his grace here, and glory hereafter, are styled “the called of Jesus Christ”, (<sup><4106></sup>Romans 1:6) and who seems to be the person here speaking, as appears from the following clause: and it may be observed, that Jacob and Israel are described here in a different manner from what they are in the beginning of the chapter, since the Lord had declared his designs of grace towards them, and that he had chosen them, and would save them for his name’s sake: which they had reason to believe he could and would do, from the account which he gives of himself: and they are called upon to hearken to him, as follows,

*I am he, I am the first, and I also am the last;* the everlasting I AM, the immutable Jehovah, the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first cause and last end of all things; phrases expressive of the self-existence, supremacy, eternity, and immutability of Christ, (<sup><4608></sup>Revelation 1:8,17), and what is it that such a sovereign, eternal and unchangeable Being cannot do?

**Ver. 13.** *Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth,* &c.] Which is ascribed to the Wisdom, Word, and Son of God, (<sup><2189></sup>Proverbs 3:19

<sup><800></sup>Hebrews 1:10). This Aben Ezra and Kimchi interpret of the left hand<sup>f956</sup>, seeing the work of the heavens is ascribed to the right hand in the following clause; the earth being less honourable than the heavens:

*and my right hand hath spanned the heavens*; stretched them out as a curtain or canopy over the earth, and measured them out with a span, as easily as a man measures anything with his hand; (see <sup><2302></sup>Isaiah 40:12),

*when I call unto them, they stand up together*; or, “I called them, and they stood up together”, as the Targum; and so may refer to the first creation of them, when at the word of God, and by his almighty fiat, they rose into being at once, (<sup><680></sup>Psalm 33:9). Kimchi observes, that the houses of Hillel and Shaminai were divided about this matter, which were created first, the heavens or the earth; at which R. Simeon ben Jochai wondered, since, according to the text, they were both created together<sup>f957</sup>; though this may be understood of the consistence and permanency of the heavens and the earth, being upheld by the Lord, and by the word of his power, and of the ready obedience of the heavenly bodies to do his will, who, like servants, rise up at once at the word of his command; (see <sup><2346></sup>Isaiah 40:26).

**Ver. 14.** *All ye assemble yourselves, and hear*, &c.] That is, the people of the Jews, Jacob and Israel his called, before addressed; who are bid to gather together, and draw nigh, that they might hear what the Lord had to say to them:

*which among them hath declared these things?* that are future, that concern the redemption and salvation of Israel? which of all the idols among the nations, or of the priests and soothsayers among them, whom the Jews were prone to listen to, that could foretell things to come, such as these the Lord had said should be?

*the Lord hath loved him*; not Israel, as the Targum; but Cyrus, whom the Lord loved as a man, as he does all his creatures; and whom he distinguished from others, by bestowing excellent qualifications on him; and whom he raised to great dignity, and gave him great honour, by using him as an instrument in his hand for the deliverance of his people; and who was a type of Christ, the dear Son of God’s love, in whom he is always well pleased.

*He will do his pleasure on Babylon, and his arm shall be on the Chaldeans*; either he shall do as he pleases with Babylon, and with his army destroy the Chaldeans; or he shall do the pleasure of God on Babylon, and

destroy the inhabitants of it, and deliver his people from it. This is also true of Christ, who will do his pleasure on mystical Babylon, destroy antichrist, and all the antichristian states, with his mighty arm and power, with the breath of his mouth, and with the brightness of his coming.

**Ver. 15.** *I, even I, have spoken, &c.*] What I will do, and what shall certainly come to pass; for not one word of the Lord ever fails; what he has spoken he will make good; what he has said to his Son in his council, and in covenant, or has delivered out by promise or prophecy, (<sup><0239></sup>Numbers 23:19):

*yea, I have called him*; not Abraham, as the Targum; but Cyrus, whom he called by name, as well as called him to his work and office as a deliverer of his people, (<sup><2361></sup>Isaiah 45:4) and so he called Christ also to his work and office, which he did not take to himself, but was called of God, (<sup><3814></sup>Hebrews 5:4,5): I have brought him; from a far country, from Persia to Babylon; and who has also brought forth his servant, the branch, the Messiah, (<sup><3818></sup>Zechariah 3:8):

*and he shall make his way prosperous*; or “his way shall be prosperous”<sup>f958</sup>; being made so by the Lord, who directed his way, and removed all difficulties and obstructions in it, (<sup><2361></sup>Isaiah 45:1-3,5,13) and so the pleasure of the Lord has prospered in the hands of Christ, who has succeeded in the work of redemption and salvation he was called to, (<sup><2351></sup>Isaiah 53:11), these are the words of God the Father, confirming what the Messiah said in the preceding, and who is introduced speaking in the next verse.

**Ver. 16.** *Come ye near unto me, hear ye this, &c.*] An address to the Jews, to attend the ministry of Christ, and hear the doctrine he had delivered to them:

*I have not spoken in secret from the beginning*; from the beginning of his ministry; which he exercised not in private houses, but in the synagogues of the Jews, and in the temple, whither a large concourse of people resorted, (<sup><4820></sup>John 18:20):

*from the time that it was, there am I*; from the time that his ministry began there, he was in the same places, in Judea and Galilee, always publicly preaching the Gospel, and doing good: or rather, “before the time that it was, there was I”<sup>f959</sup>; Christ existed before his incarnation, before he appeared as the great Prophet in Israel; he existed as the Word and Son of

God from all eternity, and was with God his Father from everlasting; he was by him, and brought up with him, and lay in his bosom so early:

*and now the Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me*; in the fulness of time, in the likeness of sinful flesh, to preach the Gospel, fulfil the law, and to redeem and save the Lord's people. Here is a glorious testimony of a trinity of Persons in the Godhead; Christ the Son of God is sent in human nature, and as Mediator Jehovah the Father and the Spirit are the senders of him; and so is a proof of the mission, commission, and authority of Christ, who came not of himself, but was sent of God, (~~430~~John 8:42), it may be rendered, "and now the Lord God hath sent me and his Spirit"<sup>f960</sup>; both were sent of God, and in this order; first, Christ, to be the Redeemer and Saviour; and then the Spirit, to be the Convincer and Comforter; (see ~~440~~John 14:26 15:26 16:7,8)

**Ver. 17.** *Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer,* &c.] A character peculiar to Christ, who engaged in covenant to be the Redeemer of his people; was promised and prophesied of as such; and who came into this world for this purpose, and has obtained eternal redemption:

*the Holy One of Israel*; who came of Israel as man, and as such was holy, and without any spot or stain of sin and who, as God, is the most holy, in his nature and works; and, as Mediator, the Sanctifier of Israel, and is in the midst of them as such:

*I am the Lord thy God*; and so fit to be the Redeemer and Sanctifier of them; and happy are those who can say with Thomas, "my Lord and my God"; and who further describes himself, and declares his work and office:

*which teacheth thee to profit*; or "teacheth thee profitable things"<sup>f961</sup>; as the whole of the Gospel ministry is, whether it respects doctrines relating to the knowledge of the Persons in the Godhead; the knowledge of God in Christ; the person and offices of Christ; and the person and operations of the Spirit: or to the knowledge of man; his lost and depraved state; having sinned in Adam, the guilt of his sin is imputed to him, and a corrupt nature propagated; the bias of the mind being to evil, and man impotent to all that is good: or to the way of salvation by the grace of God, as the fruit and effect of the love of God; the doctrines of his eternal love, and of redemption by Christ; of justification by his righteousness; pardon by his blood; atonement by his sacrifice; regeneration by his Spirit and grace; and of the perseverance of the saints in faith and holiness. These are profitable

doctrines, which serve to display the riches of divine grace, make for the glory of the Redeemer, and the good of souls, their peace, joy, comfort, and salvation. These are the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus. Or whether these teachings respect ordinances which Christ has appointed, and in his word and by his Spirit teaches men to observe; and which are profitable to lead to him, are breasts of consolation from him, and the means of spiritual strength: or whether they regard the duties of religion, the performance of good works; which, though not profitable to God, and not meritorious of anything from him, yet are profitable to men; to others by way of example, and otherwise, and to the doers of them, who find pleasure, peace, and advantage, by them. Christ was a teacher of these things when on earth, and he still teaches them by his ministers, whom he commissions and qualifies, and by his Spirit accompanying their ministrations:

*which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go*; Christ leads his people out of the wrong way, in which they naturally are, into the right way; to himself, as the way to the Father, and as the way of salvation, and unto eternal life; he takes them by the hand, and teaches them to go in the path of faith, and to walk in him by it; he leads them in the ways of truth and righteousness, in the highway of holiness, in the path of duty; and, though in a rough way of afflictions, yet in a right way to heaven and happiness.

**Ver. 18.** *O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments*, &c.] Which the Jews did not, but slighted and despised them, and were not obedient to them. So, in the times of Christ, they disregarded his doctrines, though so profitable; and despised his ordinances and commands, which were not grievous; they neither hearkened to them themselves, nor would suffer others; wherefore our Lord expresses his great concern at it, and his desire, as man, after their welfare; (see <sup><4233></sup>Matthew 23:13,37):

*then had thy peace been as a river*: their prosperity, temporal and spiritual, had been abundant, and would have always continued, have been increasing and ever flowing, yea, overflowing, like the waters of a river. The Targum is, the river Euphrates, a river which ran through Babylon: but they had no regard to the things which related to their temporal, spiritual, and eternal peace, these were hid from their eyes, (<sup><2192></sup>Luke 19:42):

*and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea*: large, abundant, numerous as the waves of the sea; which may regard acts of justice and

righteousness, which are the support of a people and state, and blessings the fruit thereof; and which God of his goodness bestows on such a people, as all kind of prosperity, protection, safety, and continuance.

**Ver. 19.** *Thy seed had also been as the sand, &c.*] Upon the sea shore, as numerous as that, as was promised to Abraham, (<sup><66217></sup>Genesis 22:17):

*and the offspring of thy bowels as the gravel thereof;* that is, of the sand; the little stones that are in it, which lie in great numbers on the sea shore; the same thing expressed in different words, denoting the number of their posterity, as it would have been, had they received the Messiah, his doctrines and ordinances: it may be rendered, “and the offspring”, or “those that go out of thy bowels”, that spring from thee, are born of thee, “as the bowels thereof”,<sup><6962></sup> that is, of the sea; as what is within it, particularly the fishes of it, which are innumerable; and so Aben Ezra and Jarchi interpret it; and which sense is mentioned by Kimchi and Ben Melech:

*his name should not have been cut off nor destroyed from before me:* the name of Israel, as the Targum has it; the name of the people of the Jews is no more in the land where they dwelt; they are cut off as a nation; their city and temple are destroyed, where they appear no more before the Lord; which would not have been, had they hearkened to the Messiah, embraced his truths, and been obedient to his commands.

**Ver. 20.** *Go ye forth of Babylon, &c.*] Which the Jews had leave to do by the proclamation of Cyrus; and so the people of God will be called to come forth out of mystical Babylon before its destruction, to which these words are applied, (<sup><66804></sup>Revelation 18:4) perhaps this, in the figurative sense, may be a call to the Christians in Jerusalem, now become another Babylon for wickedness, to come out of it a little before its ruin; and may be applied to the call of persons, by the Gospel, from a state of confusion, sin, and darkness, in which they are:

*flee ye from the Chaldeans with the voice of singing;* not by stealth, or through fear, but openly and publicly, and with all the tokens and demonstrations of joy and gladness. So the Christians separated, from the unbelieving Jews; as will the followers of the Lamb from the antichristian states, (<sup><66901></sup>Revelation 19:1) and so all that are called by grace should flee from the company of wicked men:

*declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth*; this shows that something more than deliverance from the Babylonish captivity is here intended; for what had all the ends of the earth to do with that? even redemption and salvation by Christ, typified by it; which the apostles and ministers of the word are here exhorted to declare, publish, and proclaim, to the ends of the earth; Christ having a people there to be called and saved by him; and accordingly such a declaration has been made, (<sup><5108></sup>Romans 10:18 14:22):

*say ye, the Lord hath deemed his servant Jacob*; as the people of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, so the people of God, his spiritual Jacob and Israel, his sons and servants, from sin, Satan, and the world, the law, its curses, and condemnation, by the precious blood of Christ, which is the sum and substance of the Gospel declaration.

**Ver. 21.** *And they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts, &c.]*

As when he led the people of Israel through the wilderness to Canaan's land, though they sometimes thirsted for want of water, yet they were supplied with it, by which their thirst was extinguished, to which the reference here is. So when they came out of Babylon, and passed through the waste and desert places which lay between that and Judea, they were supplied with all necessaries. Thus the apostles of Christ, when they travelled through the Gentile world, comparable to a desert, publishing redemption and salvation by Christ, had every needful supply, both of temporal and spiritual things; they lacked not any thing. In like manner the people of God, while they pass through the wilderness of this world to the heavenly glory, are furnished and refreshed with living water out of the fountain and fulness of grace in Christ, of which if a man drink, he shall thirst no more, (<sup><8144></sup>John 4:14) (<sup><2410></sup>Isaiah 49:10): he caused the waters to flow out of the rock for thee; that is, for the Israelites in the wilderness, when they were come out of Egypt, and wanted water, (<sup><1776></sup>Exodus 17:6 <sup><2010></sup>Numbers 20:10,11):

*he clave the rock also, and the waters gushed out*; (<sup><1715></sup>Psalm 78:15,16) (<sup><10541></sup>Psalm 105:41), the rock was a type of Christ, from whom the living waters of grace flow, to the support, supply, comfort, and refreshment of the saints in this world, (<sup><6104></sup>1 Corinthians 10:4). Grace is often signified by waters, because purifying and cleansing, reviving and refreshing, softening and fructifying, and an extinguisher of thirst: their gushing out denotes the abundance of it, which is received from Christ, not only at first conversion,

in the regeneration and quickening of men; in the pardon of their sins, and the justification of their persons; but in the large communications of grace, after made, for the supply of their wants: and all which come from Christ the Rock, that is higher than they, from whence their bread is given them, and their waters are sure unto them; and who is the Rock of their refuge and salvation: and the cleaving of this Rock may signify his sufferings and death; his being smitten, bruised, and broken for his people, that they may partake of his grace, and the blessings of it.

**Ver. 22.** *There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked, &c.*] To Nebuchadnezzar and his seed, says Jarchi; to the Babylonians, say Aben Ezra and Kimchi; who enjoyed no more peace and prosperity, being conquered by Cyrus, and their monarchy dissolved, and put an end to: but rather this is to be understood of the wicked among the Jews; which sense Aben Ezra mentions, though he prefers the former; and either those are meant, who refused to go out of Babylon, and the land of Chaldea, when they might, but continued among an idolatrous people, and therefore are threatened with want of peace and prosperity; or rather the Jews in the times of Christ and his apostles, who disbelieved the Messiah, despised his Gospel, and rejected his ordinances; the consequence of which was, they had no peace, no outward prosperity, but all the reverse; their nation, city, and temple, were destroyed, and they carried captive, and scattered up and down in the world; nor any inward spiritual peace, nor eternal happiness; for blaspheming and contradicting the word of the Gospel, and putting it away from them, they judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life; and the apostles were bid to turn from them to the Gentiles, and preach the Gospel to them; hence the next chapter begins,

*listen, O isles, unto me, &c.;* (see ~~2904~~ Luke 19:4 ~~4135~~ Acts 13:45-47).